

REMARKS

By this amendment, a substitute specification, new abstract, and corrected drawings are submitted along with amendments to claims 1 and 5 so as to place this application in condition for allowance.

This Amendment is also submitted responsive to the Advisory Actions of August 30, 2006 (the first Advisory Action) and October 12, 2006 (the second Advisory Action), and the interview of September 6, 2006.

As detailed above, the issues regarding the specification, drawings and abstract have been addressed.

In the first Advisory Action, the Examiner did not enter the last amendment on the grounds that the removal of the proximal end portion language raised a new issue requiring further search. The Examiner also noted that some informalities on pages 2, 5, and 21 of the original disclosure were not addressed in the substitute specification. The informalities are addressed as stated above. Also, the claims are revised to overcome the issue that the proposed revision is not fully supported by the specification and still distinguishable over the applied prior art.

In the second Advisory Action, the proposed amendments to claims were not entered, and the Examiner indicated that they raised new issues, including a question of support. In light of this indication, claims 1 and 5 are further revised to include reference to the elastic member being adjacent the proximal end portion as well as in the zone of the distal end portion. This language is found in the original specification on page 3, lines 8-11, page 7, lines 14-17, and page 19, lines 13-16. It is submitted that this language is fully supported by the specification and there is no question that an issue under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph is raised by the Amendment.

Also, in the second Advisory Action, the Examiner indicated that there was an informality on page 6 of the specification and this has been corrected in the submitted specification. The Examiner also pointed to page 17 and its apparent inconsistency with page 13 of the prior submitted specification. Page 17 has been revised to reflect the original language, and this informality has been addressed.

It is contended that claims 1 and 5 limit the claims in the manner set forth in the previous Amendment, which was indicated to be distinguishable over the prior art.

By the amendments and arguments made above, each and every issue raised in the outstanding Office Action has been resolved. The changes to the drawing and specification remove all of the objections. The changes to the claims and specification remove the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to examine this application in light of this amendment, and pass all pending claims 1-8 onto issuance.

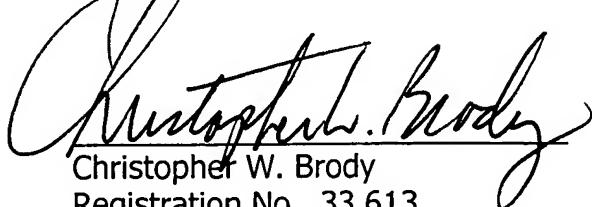
If the Examiner believes that an interview with Applicants' attorney would be helpful in expediting prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number set forth below.

The above constitutes a complete response to all issues raised in the Office Action of May 19, 2006 and subsequent Advisory Actions.

Again, reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any fee deficiencies or credit any overcharges to deposit account no.
50-1088.

Respectfully submitted,
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Docket No.: 12010-0022
Date: October 19, 2006

Attachments:

1. New Abstract
2. Substitute Specification (marked copy)
3. Substitute Specification (clean copy)
4. Submission of Corrected Drawings